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ISSUE 240
JULY 2011

common ground

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Common Ground Publishing Corp.
204-4381 Fraser St.
Vancouver, BC V5V 4G4 Canada

100% owned and operated by Canadians.
Published 12 times a year in Canada.

Publications Mail Agreement No. 40011171
Return undeliverable Canadian addresses to Circulation Dept. 204-4381 Fraser St.
Vancouver, BC V5V 4G4
ISSN No. 0824-0698

Copies printed: 75,000
Over 250,000 readers per issue
Survey shows 3 to 4 readers/copy.

Annual subscription is $60 (US$50) for one year (12 issues). Single issues are $6 (specify issue #). Payable by cheque, Visa, MasterCard, Interac or money order.

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features

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cover concept by Joseph Roberts

ethics in action awards
CHFA Canadian Health Food Association Voice of the Natural Products Industry
HANS
Canada
TLC The Land Conservancy BRITISH COLUMBIA'S NATIONAL TRUST

HST and Smart Meters: good for who?

"The World Bank approached me about six years ago to assist them with numerous projects involving the corporate governance of parliaments and the entities that report to them, such as statutory officers and crown agencies…The results speak for themselves: the World Bank continues to rely upon me for assistance."

– Craig James, the Acting Chief Electoral Officer appointed before Gordon Campbell's exit as Premier. He heads Elections BC which runs the HST referendum.

A letter titled "I have decided to vote YES to abolish the HST" came from Shane Simpson, MLA Vancouver-Hastings who's riding is just east of where Common Ground office sits. He explains how the HST's affects regular working people, here is part:

"At its core, the HST is an unprecedented tax shift, transferring $1.9 billion per year in taxes from large corporations to families and small businesses. This is unfair, and there are no significant benefits to the province to justify this wealth transfer to the corporate sector while increasing the burden on families and small business.

The government position on the HST has changed continuously since the tax was sprung on British Columbians after the 2009 election. Now, the government is pledging a 2% HST reduction by 2014. Just a few months ago Premier Clark said that dropping the rate of the HST by a point or two would be buying their votes with their own money.

The government is promoting the referendum as a choice between a 12% tax or a 10% tax, but the reality is the HST is a 7% tax increase on items not previously taxed under the PST. Items like restaurant meals, home repairs, movie tickets, taxi fares, newspapers, magazines, gym memberships, haircuts, dry cleaning – even a sandwich at a coffee shop – cost 7% more.

In addition to increased costs, the HST removes provincial control over tax policy. For example, provincial exemptions on energy-efficient appliances and bicycles were possible, but now those items are taxed 7% more.

There are no spending limits on third party HST referendum advertising, which means the corporate community will be able to spend millions to promote the HST without accountability. Even more objectionable is the government spending over $5 million of your tax dollars to promote the HST. These activities would be illegal in a regular election campaign, but the premier has chosen to allow it.

I have decided to vote YES to abolish the HST and return to a PST/GST taxation model in British Columbia."

How to vote in the HST referendum

The HST Referendum runs June 13 – July 22. The vote will be conducted by mail-in ballot. All registered voters 18 years or older are eligible to vote. Voters must be resident in British Columbia for at least six months immediately before July 22, 2011. Completed ballots must be received by Elections BC, a Service BC Centre, or an Elections BC Collection Centre before 4:30 p.m., Friday, July 22, 2011. The deadline to request a voting package was midnight, Friday, July 8, 2011, (though this may or may not change due to the postal interruption). If you have not received your ballot call Elections BC at 1-800-661-8683 or visit www.elections.bc.ca.

For more info go to www.fightHST.com

Smart meter programs are headed for disaster

BC Hydro to rushing into spending $1 billion to install "smart" hydro meters in every BC home by 2012 is a disaster waiting to happen, says Official Opposition energy critic John Horgan.

"Recent evidence from Ontario's smart meter experiment show more than 80 per cent of people are actually paying more, not less, under time-of-use billing using smart meters," said Horgan. "We are poised to make *continued p.15…*

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Pharma libido

It's tough persuading men to take drugs for a flagging sex drive

There's a granite barrier separating a man and a woman lying in bed. "Lack of Energy, Low Sex Drive" is etched into it in big letters. It's a striking photo that sends a signal swiftly and precisely: a marriage is on the rocks.

She's gazing at him over the barrier; he's staring into space. The tagline tells it all: "Has He Lost That Loving Feeling?"

This ad, which is currently running in the lifestyle section of a major Canadian newspaper, is part of a bold, new campaign to get you – and your physician – to think differently about being male and getting old. It used to be that slowing down, taking naps and losing interest in sex were common for a guy approaching 50, but if you're a pharmaceutical manufacturer keen on tapping the gargantuan market of boomer decrepitude, you find disease in the most mundane of places. Yet getting men to consider their flagging sex drive as a disease and then marketing testosterone to treat it poses one wee problem: convincing men there is a problem.

It's not as easy as it looks. The method employed in this case to sow the seeds of diagnosis is a clever self-screening questionnaire, quizzing men to see if they too may be losing that "Loving Feeling" because they lack testosterone. The ad's website, www.lowt.ca, hosts a 10-question "Low-T Quiz," including such sample questions as:

"Do you have a decrease in libido (sex drive)? Do you have a lack of energy? Are you sad and/or grumpy? Are you falling asleep after dinner? Have you noticed a recent deterioration in your ability to play sports?" And so on.

As a sometimes grumpy, frequently napping and not-as-good-at-sports-anymore kind of guy, I can only say one thing: "I resemble those remarks."

But seriously, though. One has to admire the audacity and opacity of this marketing campaign. The name of the product isn't even mentioned; nor is the name of the drug firm behind the Low-T quiz. Technically speaking, prescription drug advertising is not permitted in Canada. Oh, those pesky little Viagra or Celebrex ads running on Canadian television? They're not "real" ads, just "reminder ads" that apparently conform to the letter of the law and are Health-Canada sanctioned.

> Perhaps men today have too much testosterone already. Maybe if we augment testosterone levels in today's males we would have even less of "That Loving Feeling."

To be fair, the drug maker here is not selling a product as much as a condition. Most peri-boomer men my age (the 45-64 cohort) would answer yes to at least three of these 10 questions, after which they'd book a trip to the doctor to discuss the benefits of some of that Low-T sex juice. It's that simple.

While a conscientious doctor won't whip out the prescription pad right away on the basis of a drug-company quiz that questions your manhood, the company isn't banking on conscientious doctors. It only needs to convince some of the estimated 1.7 million Canadian male boomers (with a cluster of certain symptoms) that they might have Low T, while hoping those men have the gonads to ask their doctor for some testosterone-based libido enhancement.

At least that's how it's supposed to work. Yet according to a survey a decade ago of 1,000 people, only about 50 percent of men said they would actually consult the doctor if they had signs of low testosterone. Clearly, there's a whole group of guys that need to be convinced they've got something medically wrong with

them. Interestingly, only a third of the women polled thought men would seek medical treatment for Low-T.

Geriatrician and endocrinologist Dr. John Morley works in geriatric research at the St. Louis Veterans Affairs Medical Center. He led the team that designed the first simple screening questionnaire for androgen deficiency in aging males (ADAM). He says he created the ADAM questionnaire – which is the one the advertisement is directing men to – while sitting on the toilet. He chuckles when he adds, "It is a really crappy questionnaire."

And not everyone likes it. "It irritated a lot of academics," he says. "It is fairly good at picking up people who have low testosterone. It doesn't miss people. The problem is it also picks up a lot of people who don't have low testosterone. For example, half the people who have low libido have normal testosterone."

Barbara Mintzes agrees. She's an epidemiologist and a professor at UBC and an expert in drug advertising. She recent saw the ad for the Low T test running in the paper and was so put off she wrote a letter to Health Canada complaining about the ad. What angers her is partly the fact that hypogonadism, for which testosterone gel is approved to treat, is a relatively uncommon condition, yet, as she notes, "getting older is very common."

"As a normal part of ageing, men's testosterone levels gradually go down by about one percent per year," she adds by way of explanation. "There's a lot of normal variation around this range. This drug has not been tested as a treatment for getting older. It's been tested for serious testosterone deficiency."

One big issue for her is when you start testing every man that has some symptoms of low testosterone, "the likelihood of false positives – tests that would seem to show a problem when there isn't one – is also very high."

Are there many downsides to giving men testosterone when they don't actually need it? Of course, testosterone tests cost money as do extra doctor visits and drug prescriptions can add up. Then there are the side effects, which also can be costly. The drugs themselves are not benign and testosterone replacement therapy can cause a range of side effects such as frequent or persistent erections, nausea, vomiting or jaundice. They should be avoided by men at high risk for prostate cancer or those with heart, liver or kidney problems. Last year, a study of testosterone replacement found that older men who were given testosterone gel were more likely to develop heart disease than men on a 'placebo' or sugar pill and the study was stopped early as a result.

One of the weirdest things about testosterone gel is the possibility of virilization of the people you touch. Whazzat, you say? Well, let's put it this way; if you rub testosterone gel on your chest or arms and then decide to hug your lover, pets or your children when you're not wearing a shirt, they could develop masculine traits.

Don't believe me? Then believe the US FDA, which has issued a "Black Box" warning –the sternest drug safety warning going – that says two types of testosterone gel caused these things in children: "inappropriate enlargement of the genitalia, premature development of pubic hair, advanced bone age, increased libido and aggressive behaviour."

Yikes. That is taking the "We all pay for side effects" axiom to a new level. This parable reminds us once again of the inherent dangers in treating aging as a disease. The roller coaster of physiological changes that occur as we age is all part of life's ride, to be tolerated, embraced and even enjoyed, if possible. No amount of drugs will allow a man facing the far side of 40 to ever behave in the sack again like he did when he was 20. Oh, if it were only otherwise.

Then there's that other thing. Perhaps men today have too much testosterone already. Maybe if we augment testosterone levels in today's males we would have even less of "That Loving Feeling." If more men took prescription testosterone, would we see more wars? More fights? More spousal abuse? More hockey brawls? More obnoxious driving from guys with large trucks? Maybe the world needs less testosterone, not more.

Just a thought, as I head off for my daily nap.

Alan Cassels will release his next book, **The ABCs of Medical Screening,** this summer. This article is based on L, which stands for 'Low Testosterone.'

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Level Ground Trading organic dried fruit

Level Ground Trading, a Direct Fair Trade organization located in Victoria, BC, trades with small-scale producer groups in five developing countries, selling organic coffee, cane sugar and dried fruit. The company recently launched its rebranded dried fruit line in four varieties. Through Direct Fair Trade partnerships, farmers receive a fair price for each harvest. Fresh fruit is cut and dried by women living in Cazuca, Colombia, a refugee settlement on the outskirts of Bogotá, providing fair income, microcredit loans, education and health care opportunities for their families. This product is certified organic, contains no additives and can be found at Ten Thousand Villages and many grocery stores across Canada. **www.levelground.com**

Nu Tea on the block

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"Water is a cosmic matter" - Johann Grander

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Cosmetics manufacturers: lack of information on "parfum" stinks

A REPORT RELEASED by the David Suzuki Foundation found the majority of companies selling cosmetics and personal care products in Canada will not reveal the complete list of chemicals they use to fragrance their products. A loophole in Canada's Cosmetic Regulations allows manufacturers to list any ingredients they add "to produce or to mask a particular odour" as the generic term "parfum."

As many as 3,000 chemicals are used in fragrance mixtures, including phthalates, some of which are suspected endocrine disruptors. A single product can include a mixture of dozens or even hundreds of fragrance chemicals. Many of these unlisted ingredients are irritants and can trigger allergies, migraines and asthma symptoms. Synthetic musks are of particular concern; Environment Canada categorizes some of them as toxic.

Many cosmetic companies refuse to disclose their ingredients because of "proprietary rights." We find this unacceptable. What about the consumer's right to know what they're putting on their body? Take a stand against the cosmetics industry. Ask manufacturers to disclose their ingredients today: http://action.davidsuzuki.org/fragrance-petition

We the undersigned consumers call on manufacturers of cosmetics sold in Canada to voluntarily:

1. Support revisions to Canada's Cosmetic Regulations to strengthen the labelling provisions for fragrance ingredients.
2. Lead by example by disclosing complete lists of fragrance ingredients used in their products.
3. Ensure that products marketed as "unscented" or "fragrance-free" be truly free of fragrance chemicals.

– From the David Suzki Foundation, www.davidsuzuki.org

HEALTHBITES

Probiotics support good health

IN THE PAST decade, probiotics have become increasingly popular in Canada, but many consumers still don't fully understand what probiotics are and what effects they have on the body. The term "probiotics" describes micro-organisms or other agents that support healthy flora in the human gastrointestinal tract. Healthy flora help digest food, maintain the intestinal endothelium, inhibit pathogens or perform other useful functions. There is abundant research on the physiological effects of foods or supplements that contain probiotics, specifically on the use of certain *Lactobacillus* and *Bifidobacterium* strains, as well as the yeast *Saccharomyces boulardii*. Human clinical research on probiotics has mostly focused on gastrointestinal conditions. Some clinical studies have shown an intriguing effect of probiotics on immune function.

The benefits

Diarrhea secondary to pediatric viral infections, antibiotic therapy or foreign travel has been prevented or reduced in severity in numerous controlled trials.

Four out of five double-blind studies reported benefits to suffer- *continued p.29...*

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Letters

Cell tower gets the green light in Coquitlam

I wanted to say thanks to you good folks for bringing us balanced and truthful information on many environmental issues that affect our lives. The information you released about the privatization of BC rivers, via the Campbell government's BC Energy Plan, has been disturbing, interesting and vital for those of us concerned about our public water and our beautiful rivers. ["BC's Water Sold to the Highest Bidder" by Randy Christensen, March 2011].

I live in Port Coquitlam where after this long weekend [Victoria Day weekend], our Mayor and council will decide to put a Rogers cell tower in one of our parks near an elementary school. Despite serious opposition – 500 petition signatures, a rally at city hall and numerous letters sent and meetings held to express concerns – the city has decided to ignore its citizens and bend to the pressure of the almighty multinational corporation.

I would welcome more information from your publication with regard to the concerns and risks surrounding the rapid expansion of so much wireless technology such as Wifi, smart meters and cell towers. Most of these lack proper long-term testing and regulation, and there is virtually no effective policy and public consultation process.

I am sad for the precedent this sets for our parks, distressed for the residents and the schools that are close to these radiating towers, and I am very worried about our democracy under a Conservative majority. I thank you too for your election edition with honest information and attempts to sway! Too bad so many voters have their heads in the sand. We have *so* much to lose and lose it we will.

Please keep up the important work you do and stand up for those important things that make us Canadian. We appreciate what you do.

– Laura Dupont, Port Coquitlam, BC

Vancouver riots can teach us about compassion

In the days following the June 15th Vancouver riot, I feel I have been witnessing a second riot. A verbal and written riot against the rioters in the form of name-calling, insults, degrading comments, labelling, stereotyping, demonizing and out-casting. This second riot reminds me of George W. Bush's "War on Terror" in the sense that it is supposedly "against" something and meant to put a stop to it, but is, in fact, creating more of the same energy. What I have found disheartening is that some members of my communities are engaging in this or supporting this to varying degrees, some subtly and indirectly and others obviously and directly. If a willingness to engage in hate and violence exists, even on subtle levels, among teachers and "conscious" communities, how can we expect or even hope for positive change?

If we have decided to lead conscious lives, to take on leadership roles or to stand for values such as non-violent communication, radical inclusion, love, compassion, healing and consciousness, these values must be put into practice at *all* times with *all* people, rather than at select times with a chosen few. Perhaps a measure of whether one has truly taken on and committed to these values is by their response to challenging situations and challenging people. I'm not saying that I'm perfect, or that I manage to respond from a place of love as often as I would like to. But in the past year, I've become increasingly aware of this issue and have begun to observe myself and practice this. Because my own consciousness in this area has recently expanded, I've become more sensitive to how those around me use language, the energy dynamics that are created by it, and whether it's coming from a place of consciousness and love or from a place of unconsciousness and fear. To move from one to the other is a choice and a practice.

We're all at different places on our journeys, but we are all divine beings and equal members of the human family. In many ways, the rioters are our teachers, pointing to the flaws that exist in our culture and society. They also point to the darkness that exists within all of us, as well as the need to embrace it and to have safe and healthy ways of expressing, and not denying, the full range of human emotion. If we dug deeper and discovered the life stories and experiences of each and every individual rioter, if we opened our minds and hearts completely, we would find valid reasons for their actions, reasons that would make sense and that we could understand. I believe that everyone does the best they can given what they know at the time, that people who cause pain are in pain, and that when people know better they do better. The amount of love, compassion and forgiveness that we are able to extend to others is a reflection of how willing we are to look at our own faults and love ourselves.

Verbal and written insults are violence too. As Mahatma Ghandi said, "You must be the change you want to see in the world." If we want a non-violent world, we must practice non-violence, including the words that come out of our mouths and fingertips. I believe that we can express all of our feelings and opinions in non-violent ways and take creative and proactive steps towards healing and repairing the multi-level damage that was done, while respecting the rioters as our fellow human beings at the same time. Many great spiritual teachers and leaders throughout history have done so and were highly effective. In fact, their non-violent, positive and loving approach even toward their "enemies" is what made them powerful, timeless and unforgettable community and world leaders who created positive and lasting change.

– Celina Mikolajczyk

Rioters yearn for "clear and deep purpose"?

The riots in downtown Vancouver on June 15, 2011 reveal how many people are still without a strong sense of meaningful purpose in their lives (and also honour). When you have a clear and deep purpose, you feel truly alive so spectacles of violence are not needed to bring that feeling of aliveness. It is even more important that we continue to spread inspiration and purpose to those who feel aimless, restless and thirsty for higher truth. It's easy to feel sad and angry about violent behaviour, but it's important to realize that everyone has the capacity for greatness when their energy is inspired by a higher purpose. That's why we must shift our own responses away from shame and disgust into compassion and understanding of the root causes. And there are many causes!

This note is not meant to be a comprehensive analysis – just a reminder for us to reach for compassion. We can stop ourselves from simply calling others "assholes." We can educate ourselves and our governing institutions about new ways to co-create and share a more beautiful reality. Otherwise, the result is martial law and removal of freedoms, or further apathy from hungering souls. Some of the energy dynamics involved: whenever there is going to be a large crowd of agitated humans (whether it's a hockey game or a political protest), many people are magnetically drawn to that energy so they can experience the vivid life force that may erupt from such a field. Anger, violence and spectacle feel much more invigorating than boredom, shame and meaninglessness. The violence feels epic and larger than life and many hunger for opportunities to feel this. Many will watch for these chances, even at the cost of their own arrest, physical injury and at the cost of others' safety and property.

If people were to find their purpose through the help of loving community and mentors who cared to understand their needs, they would not be attracted to these dark pools and instead find the life force through love-based actions. Their inner fire would find expression through creativity and meaning.

– Little Woo

The amount of love, compassion and forgiveness that we are able to extend to others is a reflection of how willing we are to look at our own faults and love ourselves.

"Big O" hits the mark

I read your "Big O" article in the recent issue of *Common Ground* [Drug Bust by Alan Cassels, June 2011] and in this case, I agree with you whole-heartedly.

My mother, who is 95 years old and lives in Berlin, Germany, fell and broke her hip in November 2010. She was immediately hospitalized, had surgery and was back in her own apartment, living on her own. She had a nurse coming daily and a physiotherapist three times weekly, within two months. In the meantime, she has fallen several times, but each time manages to get up and get moving again without any outside help. She is not superwoman by any stretch of the imagination, but has lots of determination and persistence.

About 30 years ago she was diagnosed with osteoporosis. I have seen her X-rays and her spine looks like Swiss cheese. During those years, she has fallen fairly often, but her first actual fracture was at age 95 in November 2010.

I'm a firm believer in "seeing is believing", and in this case, I can affirm that your article hits the nail on the head.

Thanks for providing this important information to us, the elderly.

– Sabine Schouten

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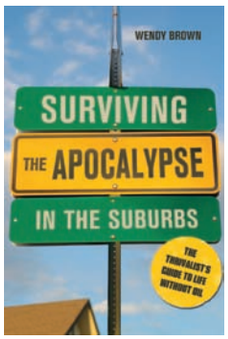

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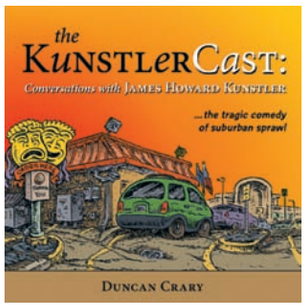

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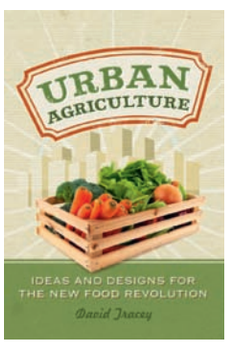

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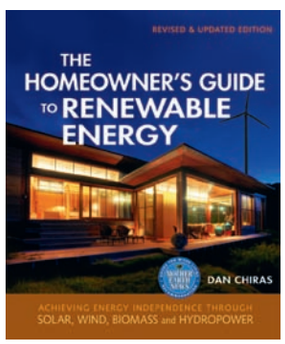
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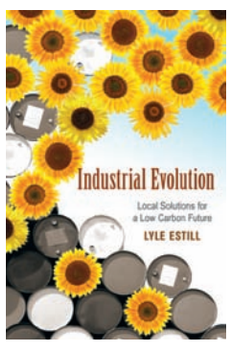

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Feed the soil, feed your soul

All animals get their food from plants, either directly or indirectly and all plants get their food from the soil. When we consider that the same chemical elements in the soil make up our bodies, we can understand how mineral-deficient soil is one of the greatest sources of human disease in the world. The root of many of the health problems facing society today – obesity, heart disease, cancer, diabetes, etc. – is the state of the world's degraded agricultural soils. This has led to compromised immune systems, which open the door to disease.

The answer to the current health crisis does not lie in mass produced food, which is dependent on chemicals that undermine soil health. Nor is the answer hydroponic greenhouse production where food isn't grown in soil at all. Real food grows organically, in topsoil that contains essential minerals. And it ripens under the sun, which enables plants to manufacture essential phytonutrients, shown to fight disease in the body.

"Society stands on the precipice of forever being bound to transgenic agriculture and transgenic food. Coexistence between transgenic seed and organic seed is impossible because transgenic seed contaminates and eventually overcomes organic seed. History has already shown this, as soon after transgenic seed for canola was introduced, organic canola became virtually extinct as a result of transgenic seed contamination. Organic corn, soybean, cotton, sugar beet and alfalfa now face the same fate, as transgenic seed has been released for each of those crops, too. And transgenic seed is being developed for many other crops, thus putting the future of all food, and indeed all agriculture, at stake." (Organic Seed Growers v. Monsanto, filed in federal court June 1, 2011. See www.organicconsumers.org)

The most efficient and affordable way to produce real food is to grow a food garden, but there's not much point in having such a garden if you don't know what to do with all the fresh fruits and vegetables. Because many people today don't know how to cook, they are forced to eat in restaurants or buy processed convenience foods of questionable nutritional value.

To address these issues, this year I'm 'cooking' a book, full of delicious ideas for consuming fresh food in season from the garden: *The Zero-Mile Diet Cookbook* is a book that connects the dots between what we eat and our level of well-being. Using simple preparation techniques, I will share inspiring ways of enjoying the bounty of the garden harvest throughout the seasons. Cooking does not have to be complicated or labour intensive. Once you master the A to Z of culinary techniques and ingredients, you can become a cook who whips up fantastic nutritious meals in no time at all. Real food fast!

Real food has disease-fighting properties

Feed the soil, feed your soul and bypass Monsanto's agenda of feeding us transgenic food, grown in depleted soils blitzed with chemical fertilizers and pesticides to make this 'food' grow. To me the choice is obvious and it really can be this simple.

Carolyn Herriot is author of **A Year on the Garden Path, a 52-Week Organic Gardening Guide** and **The Zero Mile Diet: A Year-round Guide to Growing Organic Food** (Harbour Publishing). She grows 'Seeds of Victory' at the Garden Path Centre in Victoria, BC. www.earthfuture.com/gardenpath/ The Garden Path Centre is open to visitors every Friday, 10AM-6PM until September 25, 2011.

Fibre for good gut health

To keep your intestine healthy and to avoid bowel cancer, the World Cancer Research Fund (WCRF) and the American Institute for Cancer Research (AICR) have provided the following recommendations. These are two organizations that keep a close eye on the scientific research.

Eat mostly (or all) plant foods: As it passes through our intestines, fibre acts as a roto-rooter, carrying out waste and toxic substances. Fibre is absent from meat, fish, poultry, eggs and dairy; it is found *only* in plant foods. The WCRF recommends basing all of our meals on plant foods, the less refined the better. To start, rank these breakfast options in terms of good health: a) A muffin and orange juice. b) A bowl of porridge or whole grain cereal with fresh or dried fruit. c) Fried eggs, bacon and sausages.

Choices a) and b) are plant-based, but option b) offers more health protection because the grains and fruit are less processed and provide more fibre. The diverse mix of fibre from assorted plant foods – fruits, whole grains, nuts, seeds, beans, vegetables – is far superior to a fibre supplement and protects us in a wide variety of ways.

Vegetables and fruits reduce the risk of other cancers including cancers of the mouth, pharynx, larynx, oesophagus, stomach and lung. Every day, our bodies could potentially develop cancer. The wealth of protective phytochemicals – found only in plant foods –and antioxidants can vanquish free radicals and keep dangerous substances in check. And the abundance of vitamins and minerals in plant foods strengthens our immune system.

Avoid red meat and processed meat: The WCRF and AICR have confirmed the findings from 1,016 studies focusing on meat. The studies found that red meat (beef, lamb, pork, goat) and processed meat (bacon, ham, corned beef, ham, pastrami, salami, hot dogs, and sausages preserved by smoking, curing or salting or added preservatives) increase the risk of bowel cancer.

Take part in regular physical activity: Being active for at least 30 minutes every day reduces your risk of bowel, breast and endometrial cancer. Aerobic activity is great and outdoor sports have the added benefit of increasing your vitamin D levels. Find something you enjoy so you'll do it often. Link up with a walking buddy, throw a Frisbee with the grandkids or dance in the living room to your favourite music. Many people credit their dog with inspiring them to keep fit.

Keep your weight within the optimal range: Excess body fat, especially around the waist, remains a convincing cause of bowel cancer.

Avoid alcohol: Alcohol enables DNA damage. Each drink increases your risk of bowel cancer and of breast cancer.

The WCRF hopes to raise people's awareness that bowel cancer is largely preventable and that, through lifestyle choices, people can reduce their chances of developing it and other forms of cancer.

Vesanto Melina is co-author of **Becoming Vegetarian, Becoming Vegan, Becoming Raw,** the **Food Allergy Survival Guide** and other classics. www.nutrispeak.com

Good for you, good for the planet

Legumes (beans, peas, lentils, and soyfoods) are outstanding sources of protein and the amino acid lysine. They contain fibre, which meat does not, and in many cases, they provide calcium as well. From an environmental standpoint, they are far preferable to animal flesh. Animals must consume six times the protein from soy, other beans and grain, compared with the amount of meat protein we get when we eat them. In otherwords, there is a net yield of 16 percent of the protein harvested if we eat meat.

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Quick guide to genetically modified foods

What is genetic modification?

Genetic modification (GM) is recombinant DNA technology, also called genetic engineering or GE. With genetic engineering, scientists can change plants or animals at the molecular level by inserting genes or DNA segments from other organisms. Unlike conventional breeding and hybridization, the process of genetic engineering enables the direct transfer of genes from organisms in entirely different species or kingdoms that would not breed in nature.

Monsanto is the largest seed company in the world and owns about 86% of GM seeds sown globally.

What GM foods are on the market?

Three major GM crops are grown in Canada: soy, canola and corn. These are widely used as ingredients in processed foods. Right now there is also some GM sugar on the market in Canada from GM white sugar beets. GM cotton, papaya and some types of squash are grown in the US and can be imported, mostly as processed food ingredients. There are no GM vegetables or fruits grown or sold as produce in Canada.

Are GM foods safe to eat?

There are many serious unanswered safety questions. We don't know what, if any, impacts GM foods could have on our health. Many scientists warn that:

- The process of genetic engineering can create new allergens.
- Foreign DNA can survive in the human gut.
- Animal feeding studies indicate liver and kidney problems.

GM foods are approved for human consumption based on company-produced science. The data is secret and is not peer-reviewed by independent scientists. Health Canada does not do its own testing. There is no mandatory labelling in Canada and no tracking or monitoring of possible health impacts.

What are the environmental risks?

Once GM plants are released into the environment, they cannot be controlled or recalled. Genetic pollution is irreversible living pollution that self-replicates. Contamination of other plants is a major problem because the genes from any crop can move, via seed and pollen flow. GM crops are resulting in increased pesticide use, herbicide tolerant weeds and expansion of industrial farming.

Who owns GM seeds?

GM technology facilitates corporate control because patents on genetic sequences mean that corporations can own seeds. Monsanto is the largest seed company in the world and owns about 86 percent of GM seeds sown globally. Check www.cban.ca/gmfoods for updates.

How can I avoid GM foods?

Our government does not require labeling. But you can still make a choice. Eating certified organic food is one way you can avoid GM food because GM is prohibited in organic farming. This includes organic dairy, eggs and meat because animals in organic farming are not fed GM grains like corn or soy. You can avoid eating processed foods with corn, canola and soy ingredients. You can buy cane sugar to avoid eating sugar from GM sugarbeets. Support farmers who fight GM. Buy food directly from farmers who do not plant GM corn, canola or soy or use GM grains for meat, dairy or egg production.

What can I do to stop GM foods?

1. Make choices to eat non-GM foods.
2. Talk to your friends and family about GM foods. Subscribe for online news and action initiatives at www.cban.ca/About/CBAN-e-News
3. Connect with a group in your community to share information and action. Contact CBAN for materials and strategic action ideas.
4. Join the campaign to stop GM animals.
5. Donate today! www.cban.ca/donate

GE-free Zones

Did you know that there are already GE-free Zones in Canada? In 2004, Powell River in BC became the first GE Free Zone in the country. The Village of Kaslo (January 13, 2009), the City of Rossland (May 11, 2009) and the City of Nelson (November 3, 2008) in BC have all passed GE Free Resolutions. The Society for a GE Free BC with GE Free Kootenays and GE Free Yukon are working hard to secure GE Free Zones.

Canadian Biotechnology Action Network, info@cban.ca www.cban.ca Watch the documentary **The World According to Monsanto** online at www.topdocumentaryfilms.com

GM crops grown in Canada

Crop	Trait	Where on the shelves
Corn	Insect resistant, herbicide tolerant	Corn flakes, corn chips, cornstarch, corn syrup, corn oil & other corn ingredients in processed foods. Sweeteners like glucose and fructose. Eggs, milk & meat.
Canola	Herbicide tolerant	Canola oil. Eggs, milk & meat.
Soy.	Herbicide tolerant	Soy oil. Soy protein. Soy lecithin. Tofu. Soy beverages. Soy puddings. Eggs, milk & meat.
Sugar beet	Herbicide tolerant	Sugar

GM foods imported to Canada

Food	Grown	Where on the shelves
Cottonseed oil	US	Cottonseed oil. Vegetable oil in processed foods, i.e. potato chips
Papaya	US (Hawaii)	Papaya in fruit juices & other processed foods
Squash	US	Some zucchini. Yellow crookneck & straightneck squash
Milk products (Bovine Growth Hormone)	US	Milk solids & powder. Frozen desserts with dairy. Imported mixed drinks with milk ingredients.

Science Matters David Suzuki with Ian Hanington

Small farms – smart energy

We often assume the only way to feed the world's rapidly growing human population is with large-scale industrial agriculture. But recent scientific research is challenging those assumptions. Our global approaches to agriculture are critical. Close to one billion people are malnourished and many more are finding it difficult to feed their families. But is large-scale industrial farming the answer?

Large industrial farms are energy intensive, using massive amounts of fossil fuels for machinery, processing and transportation. Burning fossil fuels contributes to climate change and the increasing price of oil is causing food prices to rise. And industrial farms require more chemical inputs, such as pesticides and fertilizers.

According to a review of scientific literature by Michael Jahi Chappell and Liliana Lavalle, published in the journal *Agriculture and Human Values*, agricultural development is a major factor in the rapid decline in global biodiversity.

In their study, "Food Security and Biodiversity: Can We Have Both?" the authors note that agriculture, which takes up about 40 percent of the world's land surface (excluding Antarctica), "represents perhaps the biggest challenge to biodiversity" because of the natural habitat that gets converted or destroyed.

A world where hunger and obesity are epidemic shows that the problem is more of equity and distribution than shortage.

Concerns about industrial agriculture as a solution to world hunger are not new. As author and organic farmer Eliot Coleman points out in an article for Grist.org, in the 19th century when farming was shifting from small-scale to large, some agriculturists argued "the thinking behind industrial agriculture was based upon the mistaken premise that nature is inadequate and needs to be replaced with human systems…"

Volumes of research clearly show that small-scale farming, especially using "organic" methods, is much better in terms of environmental and biodiversity impact. But is it a practical way to feed seven billion people?

Chappell and Lavalle point to research showing "small farms using alternative agricultural techniques may be two to four times more energy efficient than large conventional farms." They also found studies demonstrating "small farms almost always produce higher output levels per unit area than larger farms." One of the studies they looked at concluded "alternative methods could produce enough food on a global basis to sustain the current human population and potentially an even larger population, without increasing the agricultural land base."

This is in part because the global food shortage is a myth. The fact that we live in a world where hunger and obesity are epidemic shows that the problem is more of equity and distribution than shortage. With globalized food markets and large-scale farming, those with the most money get the most food.

It's a crucial issue that requires more study… but it's hard to disagree with Chappell and Lavalle's conclusion: "If it is ... possible for alternative agriculture to provide sufficient yields, maintain a higher level of biodiversity, and avoid pressure to expand the agricultural land base, it would indicate that the best solution to both food security and biodiversity problems would be widespread conversion to alternative practices."

We need to grow food in ways that make feeding people a bigger priority than generating profits for large agribusinesses.

Written with contributions from **David Suzuki Foundation** editorial and communications specialist **Ian Hanington**. Learn more at www.davidsuzuki.org

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...***HST*** *from p.22*

exactly the same mistakes here in BC.

More than four million smart meters have been installed across Ontario, allowing for a time-of-use billing scheme to be implemented that is intended to reward users with lower rates for using electricity in off-peak hours. But recent numbers from Toronto Hydro show that 84 per cent of people's electricity bills have gone up, not down. "The Ontario experience has shown that smart meters don't work when it comes to conserving energy and saving money. Instead, they are proving to do just the opposite," said Horgan, noting the billion-dollar price tag to install the meters in BC could be better spent elsewhere.

"Just imagine how much good a billion dollars could do to stimulate the economy and save energy if it was directed to home energy retrofits. Energy efficiency measures like upgrading heating systems, proper insulation, and other home upgrades are a proven way to manage electricity demand."

"British Columbians are staring down the barrel of a 50 per cent rate increase over a short five-year period, mainly due to an ideologically driven private power agenda architected over the past seven years by the B.C. Liberals," said Horgan.

B.C. Hydro announced that electricity bills will be going up by an average of $7 per month, or about 10 per cent, each year from 2012 to 2014. That means the average household will spend $252 per year more on their electricity bill by 2014. These increases are in addition to the increase of nearly 13 per cent planned for 2011 and

"It's time to review the impact private power producers are having on the bottom line at B.C Hydro. It is just not good enough for the B.C. Liberals to say 'trust us' - the public needs an independent look at this massive transfer of wealth. But the B.C. Liberals have exempted all private power projects as well as billions in capital spending from oversight."

Maybe it is time to follow Mahatma Gandhi's words, "*When the people lead the leaders will follow." So* let the large corporations pay their fair part of taxes instead of off loading it to the peasants. Get smart rather than being irradiated by so called smart meters... maybe they need a referendum too.

www.stopsmartmeters.org / www.emrabc.org / www.citizensforsafetechnolgy.org

Geoff Olson

Bolivia's *Law of Mother Earth*

Ecuador and Bolivia carve out a legal plan for the planet

Mountains, lakes, rivers and streams with legal representation? Animals and plants with their own ministry? It's not a Gary Larson cartoon or a Yann Martel plotline – it's a long overdue concept. In September of 2008, Ecuador passed a constitution granting rights to living things and their environment. "Nature has the right to exist, persist, maintain and regenerate its vital cycles, structure, functions and its processes in evolution," the document states. The Ecuadorian government must take "precaution and restriction measures in all the activities that can lead to the extinction of species, the destruction of the ecosystems or the permanent alteration of the natural cycles."

As for mainstream media's response to this historic moment in constitutional law and environmentalism? Tumbleweeds and crickets, with a lone wolf howling in the distance. Project Censored voted this 18th of its *Top 25 Censored Stories* of 2009. One of the few mainstream outlets to clue in to the story, the *Los Angeles Times*, trivialized the development in Ecuador, noting it "sounded like a stunt by the San Francisco city council."

There was more to come. On April 22 of this year, Bolivia passed "The Law of Mother Earth" (*Ley de Derechos de la Madre Tierra*). With Bolivia choosing Earth Day to riff off Ecuador's legal template, the global media stopped hitting the snooze button and woke up to the whiff of something new. Clearly, something strange and possibly disturbing was going on with the Empire's hired help in the Southern Hemisphere. Something even bigger than fair trade coffee or Shakira.

Translated from Spanish, the new Bolivian law states of Mother Earth: "She is sacred, fertile and the source of life that feeds and cares for all living beings in her womb. She is in permanent balance, harmony and communication with the cosmos. She is comprised of all ecosystems and living beings and their self-organization."

The Bolivian constitution formalized the belief system of the indigenous people of the Andes, who pay homage to Pachamama, the female spirit of nature. This isn't just a modest constitutional tweak or a publicity stunt to draw in Roots-attired ecotourists. It's meant to have real-world effects. "No commercialism," states one article in the document: "Neither living systems nor processes that sustain them may be commercialized, nor serve anyone's private property."

For transnational corporations operating in the area, these provisions are probably about as welcome as the return of Che Guevera as a 50-foot Transformer with a mortar-proof beret. Yet the Law of Mother Earth isn't about back-engineering some imagined Pre-Columbian paradise or introducing a Stalinist game preserve for coffee growers and capybaras. It encourages the development "of policies to ensure long-term energy sovereignty, increased efficiency and the gradual incorporation of clean and renewable alternative sources into the energy matrix."

Immediately after the UN General Assembly adopted a resolution to designate April 22 "International Mother Earth Day," the newly elected President of Bolivia addressed the press. "If we want to safeguard mankind, then we need to safeguard the planet. That is the next major task of the United Nations," Evo Morales stated. Thinking globally, but acting locally, Morales ran with the ball himself.

In speaking about Bolivia's initiative, Canadian activist Maude Barlow told *Postmedia News*, "It's going to have huge resonance around the world. It's going to start first with these southern countries trying to protect their land and their people from exploitation, but I think it will be grabbed onto by communities in our countries, for example, fighting the tar sands in Alberta."

Mari Margil, associate director of the Environmental Legal Defense Fund, says the high profits of transnational corporations depend on treating "countries and ecosystems like cheap hotels." For the indigenous people of Bolivia, the tension between ancient beliefs and foreign intervention is more than a historical debating point. It's represented on the horizon as the Potosi Mountain. The gold and silver the Spanish looted from the Aztec and Incan empires was just the beginning; Potosi was the gift that kept on giving to European powers. Historians estimate that over the three centuries of silver mining at the mountain, more than a million Andeans died at their labours.

The Industrial Revolution was largely financed by the riches of the New World, noted Karl Marx and the economic historians that succeeded him. "An indispensable condition for the establishment of manufacturing industry," Marx wrote in 1847, "was the accumulation of capital facilitated by the discovery of America and the importation of its precious metals." Genoese and German bankers, who backed the Spanish conquests, found themselves enriched by melted-down gold and silver. Looking to increase their

photo © Monika Wisniewska

wealth through compound interest, they turned to northern Europe where they financed shipbuilding, munitions industries and other armament-related ventures. Armed to the teeth through riches that originated with slave labour, the great powers were soon preparing for the First World War of the 20th century. In a spin of the karmic wheel of international relations, Potosi's silver contributed to the blowback of borderless capital on the battlefields of Europe.

The exploitation games in the southern hemisphere have gone from precious metals to "blue gold." In November of 2001, the US firm Bechtel sued Bolivia for $25 million for cancelling a contract to manage the water system of Cochabamba, the third largest city in the country. The local people took to the streets to protest the huge price hikes for water and the insane new restrictions for collecting rainwater from rooftops, which required a permit.

For years, the World Bank had pressured Bolivia to privatize its state enterprises. Bechtel was one of the beneficiaries of this pressure, but only temporarily. In another spin of the Karmic wheel of international relations, the protests spread across the country, chasing the white, US-endorsed presidential candidate onto a plane to Washington and sweeping into office the dark-skinned socialist Evo Morales, who led the massive protests. Bechtel dropped the lawsuit in 2006.

The two opposing points of view about property, from the Old World and the New

> The new Bolivian law states of Mother Earth: "She is sacred, fertile and the source of life that feeds and cares for all living beings in her womb. She is in permanent balance, harmony and communication with the cosmos..."

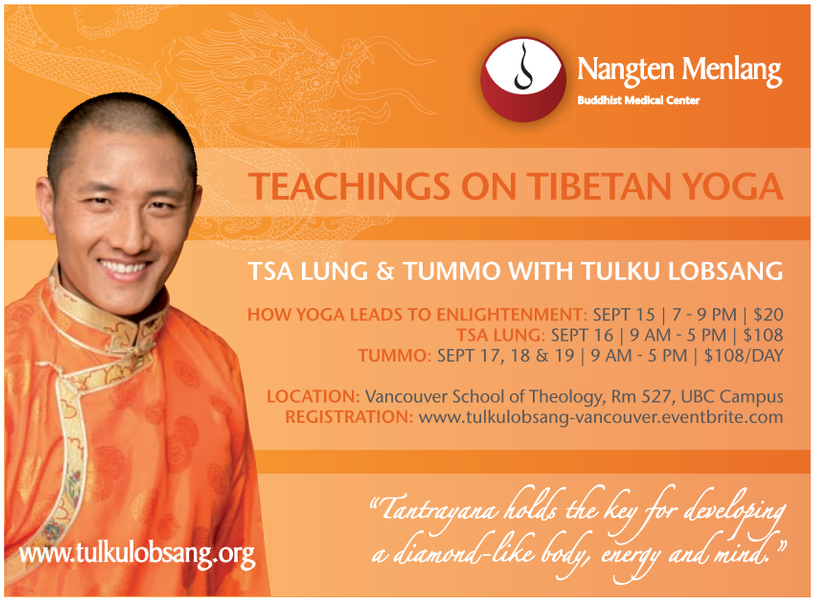
World – "the land and its resources belongs to us" versus "we belong to the land and its resources" – have been like matter and antimatter in the centuries-long experiment in colonialism and neocolonialism. It seems these two world-views could never coexist without one side destroying the other (the winners almost always being the ones with guns, germs and steel).

Capitalism has been called a "machine for destroying limits." Yet it is now banging up against the limits of the biosphere itself. The planet's animals and plants are physically embedded in all there is, or ever will be, until the Sun dies out. Yet through the technical brilliance of hairless monkeys with opposable thumbs, Earth is now in its "sixth great extinction." The disappearance of natural capital and the loss of thousands of species is the mortgage we're paying on an unsustainable future.

For centuries, hunter-gatherer populations saw firsthand the results of their hunting behaviour on the local flora and fauna. They overshot the mark on a regular basis, but they tacitly understood resource limits better than pinstriped executives playing with financial derivatives and other faith-based initiatives. So-called 'primitives' weren't removed several times over from the biological sources of their labour and their destructive capacity was checked by their technological limits.

Yet how do constitutional rights for nature translate into actual policy? In a Project Censored update, Ecuadorian Carlos Zorrilla, executive director of *Defensa y Conservación Ecológica de Intag,* said he expected resistance. "As exciting as these developments are, it was also inevitable that the people in power would, and will, find ways to circumvent, undermine and ignore those rights." Zorrilla indicated President Rafael Correa's new mining law, "which takes rights-to-nature loopholes and widens them so that giant dirt movers could easily drive through them."

Ecuadorian President Correa, a nominal leftist, presided over the signing of the Law of Nature. Now, he must perform a balancing act with foreign mining interests, which contribute much of the economic activity in Ecuador, as they do in Bolivia. In the subjective weighing of costs to nature against benefits to the local economy, the legal wrangling is sure to be heated and prolonged. In a June 2011 update posted on Decoin.com, Zorrilla writes of the "mining mayhem" in the *continued p.29...*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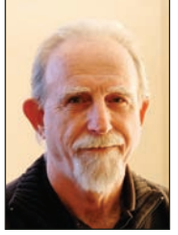

Mac McLaughlin

ZODIAC

StarWise July 2011

HAPPY BIRTHDAY CANADA! In astro-logic, a 'birthday' is a celebration of the return of the Sun to its exact degree of longitude according to your time of birth. As we know, birthdays are either high or low times, times of laughter or tears. As to how things go, much will depend on the condition and position of the planets overhead and how they relate to your birth planets.

At the time of the solar eclipse on July 1, the Sun returns to the exact location it occupied when Canada became a nation. The eclipse heralds a new beginning and a time of a great transition for our nation. Prime Minister Stephen Harper has a majority government and it is on the move. Jupiter rises in the east in the eclipse chart and will hover over Harper's Sun in Taurus throughout the coming months. This is a very good omen for him, the people, the economy and the country. His power and popularity will increase, as he strives to keep the ship on a steady course. Saturn has a strong influence as well and we might as well get ready to tighten the belt as a series of astringency measures, cutbacks and other trimmings are put into place. We may not enjoy the castor oil remedy, but it is probably necessary and will

ARIES Mar 21 - Apr 19
The 'double O principal' constitutes the two Herculean tasks that must be met this year and the next – as in 'Organic and Original.' You must revolutionize your life in an original way and learn to live it organically, thereby ensuring your survival.

TAURUS Apr 20 - May 21
Jupiter 'King of the Gods' has just arrived in your sign. He brings abundance, good timing, good fortune, faith and happy times throughout the year. However, too much of anything is not healthy and the trick during these times is moderation.

GEMINI May 22 - Jun 20
You may be in the mood to get things done and you might be surprised by how much you can accomplish once you roll your sleeves up to the task. Fiery Mars pays a visit, stirring up everything and everyone throughout the month.

CANCER Jun 21 - Jul 22
Solar and lunar eclipses this month bring their specific karma. The fates are riding high and you might be as well. Regardless of our own plans, the universal plan will come into play and make your day. Love is in the air.

LEO Jul 23 - Aug 22
Man plans and the universe laughs. It is your time to plan and hopefully laughter and happiness follow in your footsteps later in the month. Behind the scenes, work takes place at a hectic pace. Excitement, action and attraction are heading your way.

VIRGO Aug 23 - Sep 22
Your hard work and dedication may have caught the attention of people in positions of power. It's your time to mix and mingle and reach out to like-minded people. You may find that truth is stranger than fiction, as new realities dawn and old limitations evaporate.

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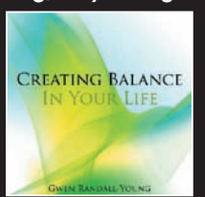

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help in the long run. It really sounds like business as usual, but with more intensity as we blossom and bloom as a country.

The stars are indicating a loss or a departure of someone significant, as solar eclipses with a hand from Saturn will point to the loss of a leader. It is also an indicator of some type of fallout among the high and mighty. Possibly some type of abuse of power will be exposed. I'm sure we'll read all about it soon enough.

Vancouver Mayor Gregor Robertson's chart receives the benefits of Jupiter this year bringing increased popularity and support. We will hear much more about this man as his star is rising and he will be an influential leader for some time to come. His strong Virgo qualities prompt him towards streamlining and organizing all that he can. With a prominent Jupiter in his birth chart, he will garner the trust and support of the people. I imagine that some day he will lead the province if he doesn't stray off course and become seduced by the glitter and gold. Virgo people are generally very pragmatic, sensible, realistic, dedicated and hard working. Truth, trust and honour will be the wind that fills his sails. 'Service to the people' will be his mantra.

LIBRA Sep 23 - Oct 22
Career changes are in the wind and lifestyle changes too. You may be anxious to get things done and get settled down. Saturn's presence continues to carve his wisdom into your soul. His lessons are sobering and often we are thankful in the long run for what he brings our way.

SCORPIO Oct 23 - Nov 21
Jupiter casts his special glance your way bringing opportunities to develop important connections throughout the rest of the year. Those that support rather than oppose show up now. Travel is highlighted and changes of a spiritual kind are destined to take place.

SAGITTARIUS Nov 22 - Dec 21
Certain contentious issues are destined to pop up throughout the month. You may enjoy the scrum and possibly even know the outcome before the rest. Joint monies, inheritances, taxes and the like are on the menu. Travel plans loom into sight to your great delight.

CAPRICORN Dec 22 - Jan 19
A critical time has arrived, but not so much negative-wise but in the sense that many changes are taking place and some of them may be beyond your control. Go with the flow and make amends where you can. July 14 tells the tale.

AQUARIUS Jan 20 - Feb 19
Organize, harmonize and balance are the key objectives to be obtained throughout the month. Hard work pays excellent dividends in the near future. Excitement, adventure and love are on the menu. Home and family figure strongly, now more than ever.

PISCES Feb 20 - Mar 20
Pisces carries the wisdom garnered by all the signs and it transmutes to human compassion, service, love and caring. Neptune transits through Pisces from April to July 2011 and from February 2012 to January 2026. A most profound time of discovery and spiritual awakening approaches.

Mac McLaughlin has been a practising, professional astrologer for more than four decades. His popular **Straight Stars** column ran in Vancouver's largest weekly newspaper for 11 years. Email mac@macsstars.com or call 604-731-1109

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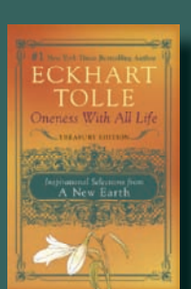

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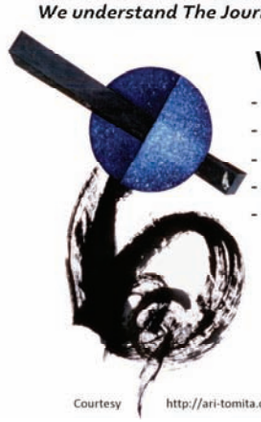
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an interview with Eckhart Tolle

To read Eckhart Tolle's latest column, please see the current print edition of Common Ground. For copyright reasons, we are authorized to publish this column in our print version only.

JR: In your new book, I feel like you're the modern equivalent of the explorers that came to the new world, but an explorer and documenter of consciousness, discovering a new world.

ET: Yes, discovering is the right word. It's not that you need to make a great effort to attain it or bring it about or acquire it. It's discovering it's already there in you – conscious awareness that's obscured, or partially obscured, in many people. It's a discovery of something already there.

It's like waking up after a dream, because identification with the thinking mind and its stories and the old emotional conditioning is like being immersed in a kind of dream world, which very often turns into a nightmare – acting out old conditioned patterns again and again. The whole structure of the egoic mind is an old dysfunction.

There's some evidence that the ego started about 6,000 years ago, but nobody can say for sure. Before that, humans were in a state of innocence. When we go beyond the dysfunction of the ego, we regain our original innocence, but on a much deeper level. This is why Jesus said unless we become as little children we cannot enter the kingdom of heaven.

So, returning to the original innocence, and at the same time going much deeper into that with full awareness – that's the process. We're coming out of thousands of years of dreadful suffering, almost the whole of recorded history of humanity. If you really look at it in an unbiased way, as if you'd never seen it before, one cannot but admit that, to a large extent, 80 to 90 percent of it is a history of pathological insanity, the suffering that humans have created for themselves and, of course, inflicting it upon others.

JR: And exporting it through colonization to the new world.

ET: Yes, so the important part of the awakening process is the realization of the insanity in human history, collectively, to this day playing itself out in world events. Also, to be aware of the insanity within oneself – old, dysfunctional patterns that come again and again that create suffering. So when you see that you're insane, then you're not completely insane. Sanity comes the moment you realize the fact of insanity. To see insanity is not a negative thing.

JR: At least you're out of denial.

ET: Yes, that's why in the film A Beautiful Mind, for example, which is about a mathematical genius who did have a mental dysfunction, his mind was developed in certain areas but he was also insane. The viewer of the film doesn't know that until a certain point when the character realizes that many of his experiences are delusions. At that moment, his healing begins. He's not cured yet, but his healing begins because he's recognized his own insanity. That recognition can only come out of sanity, which is the awareness of unconditioned consciousness.

JR: I remember you saying before you published your last book that the next one would be about why there isn't peace on this planet. Was finding a solution one of the major intentions of A New Earth?

ET: Yes, to see the nature of the major dysfunction. That's why I talk quite a bit about the ego in this book. We need to recognize the nature of the dysfunction. Sometimes, even very great Eastern teachers sometimes neglect that part because they're not really touched by the magnitude of, especially, the Western ego. So it's very important for us to see the dysfunction so that we can recognize it when it arises.

Part of the new book is about recognizing the ego, which I regard as a semi-autonomous energy. It's an energy field. Every thought you think is an energy field. It has a form and then it dissolves and then there is another form. The ego itself is an energy field and it has a collective and individual aspect. Every individual ego is part of the collective. They're connected. Every individual is a manifestation of the collective. To recognize that is essential because the ego, being a very clever entity, has many ways of reappearing. Even if you've seen it in one disguise, it can suddenly reappear in a new one.

You might suddenly realize your whole sense of self, identity, is being derived from your possessions and social position. You see that your whole sense of identity is bound up with that and you recognize one aspect of ego. Well, usually it only comes to people when they suffer, when the identification with something no longer works…

It's recognizing the ego in its many disguises. I've met Buddhist monks who had enormous egos without knowing it. I remember being in a monastery afraid to approach them because they seemed so aloof. Yet I've met other Buddhist monks who were like little children and it was a joy to talk to them because they'd laugh and not take themselves seriously at all. They didn't take the whole Buddhist thing seriously either, yet they practised it knowing it was only a form and they weren't identified with it.

There's a dimension in us that has nothing to do with content. Self-realization is that I am not that. I'm not my story, not my grievances and *continued p.29…*

Devaki Thomas

Vernon hosts the Komasket Music Festival

Created 10 years ago by BC reggae dance band Samsara, the annual Komasket Music Festival is the Okanagan's Cultural Global Gathering, bringing together 3000 – 4000 people and presenting world beat, folk and funk artists from all over the world. The KMF is an event unique to the area with a conscious organic community flavour combining an intimate cultural experience, 3 days of exploring music and art, dancing to live music, camping, workshops, market shopping, kids activities, first nations cultural exploration on the shores of Okanagan Lake.

The land is the Powwow Grounds of the Okanagan Nation which was a gathering place for family hunting parties for the first nations people of the area for hundreds of years. The grounds are designated 'dry' land which has naturally shaped the festival to attract a family vibe.

Founders Thomas & Devaki Thomas were invited to play the land with their band Samsara by an Okanagan elder back in 2002 and they envisioned an intimate gathering with music at its heart on land that was considered sacred. They work year round with a dedicated team of volunteers and with the Okanagan Nations Chief and Council to present this somewhat historical event.

Artists for the 2011 line up feature Jon Anderson, the Voice of Yes, Grammy Award winning lead singer of Progressive Rock's Super Group YES, Canada's own folk icon, Cree singer/songwriter Buffy St Marie, experimental Hip Hop Jazz group Digable Planets based in New York City, from Johannesburg South Africa, Nkulee Dube and her 9 piece African reggae band, daughter of late African Reggae King, Lucky Dube, Australia's own world groove dance band OKA, undisputed heavyweights of North Western Hip hop, SweatShop Union, back for the fest, festival hosts & founders Samsara hailing now from London UK via Vernon BC via Trinidad, West Indies, BC's own World Groove Master, Juno award winner DJ Adham Shaikh, Vancouver's Samba, gypsy folk Minstrels Maria in the Shower, Kytami with DJ Phonograff formerly of Delhi 2 Dublin the Queen of the Violin, BC island vibe band Aaron Nazrul & the Boom Boom's, Vancouver's jazz Indian fusion group Niktex, plus Metis, Tambura Rasa, Bulat Gafarov, Kurai Mubaiwa, Dallas Arcand, Tibet's own Jamyang Yeshi, Emily Spiller, Taiya Curle, Suzanne Teng, Ashley Robyn Slater and many more.

For more info on the festival www.komasketmusicfestival.com/

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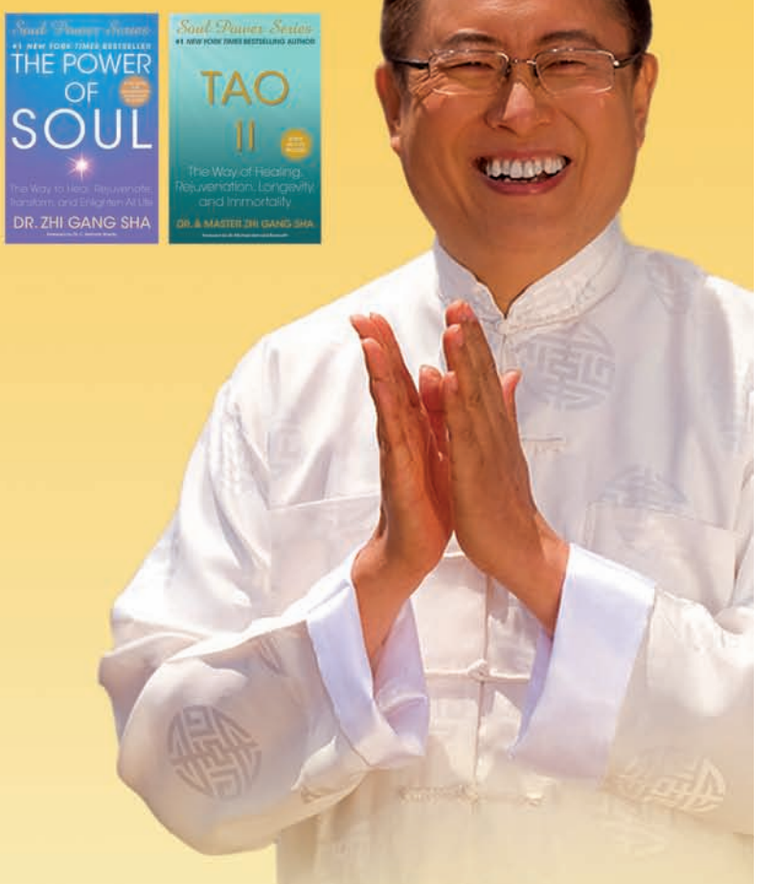

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What, me worry?

Worry is a complete cycle of inefficient thought revolving about a pivot of fear.
~Author Unknown

Are you a worrier? Most people worry sometimes, but some worry most of the time. We could learn a lot from our pets. They really know how to live in the moment. They only worry when there is an imminent threat, not an imagined one.

Humans, on the other hand, often worry about what *might* happen as opposed to something that is actually happening. Worry is fear based, often arising when the ego realizes it cannot control the future. Because it does not feel in control, it begins to imagine all the things that could possibly go wrong.

When the mind goes into fear mode, it starts with a little worry that leads to bigger worries until the worrier feels completely overwhelmed. I say, "when the mind goes into fear mode" because it tends to just happen; rarely do we make a conscious decision to not worry ourselves silly. Worriers tend to believe they can't help it.

Some think if they don't worry, they won't be proactive and prepared for the worst. However, in most cases the worry just goes around and around, gaining steam. If we have a concern and so do some productive thinking, that is different from worrying. Once we handle a concern, we can let it go and move on. Worriers never seem to move on, other than moving from one worry to another. Worry makes us feel vulnerable, unsure and disempowered. Problem solving leaves us feeling competent and empowered.

We could learn a lot from our pets. They only worry when there is an imminent threat, not an imagined one.

Worry robs us of the joy of life and keeps us from being in the present moment. It can lead to anxiety, depression, sleep difficulties and even substance abuse. So if one has the worry habit, how can that be changed?

It comes down to a couple of things. One is our worldview. If we see the world as an unsafe place where bad things happen, we will always need to be on guard. If, instead, we see that life is filled with joy and sorrow, ups and downs, certainties and uncertainties, and that the journey is about rising to the challenges and continuing to move forward, we are better able to relax and take things as they come. We also must develop the ability to control our thoughts. It may be difficult, but not impossible.

Imagine the mind is like a television with many different channels. When you are watching TV, you may decide to change the channel if a violent movie is playing. Similarly, if the mind is playing a 'worry channel,' you can develop the ability to change the channel to one that is more positive.

The first step in learning to do this is to practise "thought stopping." When you find yourself worrying, you need to stop those thoughts. If that seems difficult or the thought is persistent, do something else: phone a friend, play a computer game, read a book, put on your iPod or go for a run. The main thing is to begin, however slowly, to take charge of your thoughts.

Life will present challenges. When it does, decide if there is any action you can take. If there is, then do it. If your worries are of the 'what if?' variety, you need to practise thought stopping, commit to a more positive perspective and find more productive outlets for your creative imagination.

Gwen Randall-Young is an author and psychotherapist in private practice. For articles and information about her books, CDs and the new "Creating Healthy Relationships" series, visit www.gwen.ca See display ad this issue.

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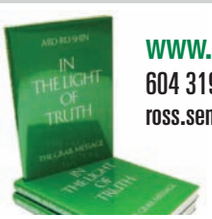

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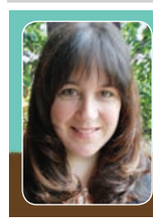

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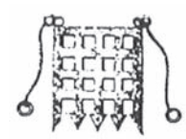

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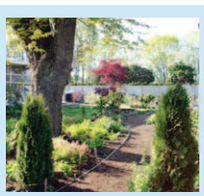
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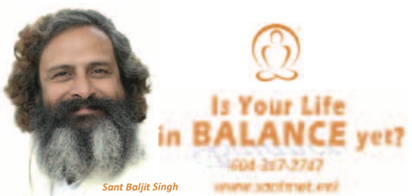

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*...**Tolle** from pg. 20*

hang-ups, not the story of me that I'm telling other people at parties or repeating in my head again and again. That is only form. It's temporary.

When you see what you're not, it's already liberating. Something inside you breathes a sigh of relief. Then, of course, the mind begins to ask, "What are you if you are not that?" It wants an answer. In other words, it wants some new form. It wants a new thought. There must be a thought that I am. But it doesn't work like that. That's why the great book the Tao Te Ching starts with the line that the Tao that can be spoken of is not the true Tao because Tao – in the ancient Chinese way of putting it – is the formless dimension. You could say pure consciousness, but with any term we use we have to be careful it's not mistaken for "It." Otherwise, the mind comes in and says, "Oh, consciousness, yes. I believe that I'm consciousness." It's not another belief. It's finding that spaciousness inside yourself that's there when you let go of identification of form.

Excerpted from **Just now: a two-part interview with Eckhart Tolle** by Joseph Roberts. Read the full interview online. Go to www.commonground.ca Click on archives. Click on 2007 at the top of the page. For part one, click on September 2007. For part two, click on October 2007.

*...**HealthBites** from pg. 9*

ers of irritable bowel syndrome. Some success has also been reported in the treatment of ulcerative colitis. Some studies have looked at the effect of probiotics on the immune system and are showing positive reports.

Which foods or supplements contain probiotics?

Probiotics appear to be safe and promising dietary supplements. While several foods, such as yogurt, kefir and sauerkraut contain probiotic organisms, their strains may be quite different and in much lower concentrations compared with the supplements employed in clinical trials. Research has yet to show whether certain strains are superior to others and what the optimal daily intake should be for treatment and prevention of various diseases. The doses used in studies ranged from two billion to several hundred billion colony-forming units per day.

For more information on health and safety, visit the **Ontario Chiropractic Association** website at site www.chiropractic.on.ca or call 877-327-2273.

*...**Olson** from pg. 17*

Intag area, and legal challenges of native Ecuadorians against the world's largest cement company, Lafarge. There is a new lawsuit underway by 141 persons affected by the activities of the company.

The last word won't be from lawyers, but from Pachamama herself. Nature is as much about savagery as sustenance; in fact, she can be a monstrous bitch, as anyone ever caught in an earthquake or tornado can attest. Most Earth-based mythologies over time have acknowledged nature's creative and destructive aspects. Even without human intervention, animal populations crash and burn on a regular basis. Life does not exist in balance, but in a state of 'dynamic disequilibrium,' ecologists tell us. It's a complicated, glorious mess, a billion year spree of chance and necessity. Yet for all the chaos, a balance prevails on the planetary scale. For billions of years, life on Earth has performed the amazing trick of homeostasis, keeping concentrations of atmospheric gases at optimal conditions for its own existence.

Skeptics will say there is nothing to guarantee that a mystical, Earth-based worldview can't devolve into a reactionary, even totalitarian, system of thought. What of the Mayans and Aztecs, for example? Neither of these pagan civilizations was known for peaceful coexistence with their neighbours and many scholars believe the sudden collapse of the Mayan civilization somewhere between the eighth and ninth century AD came about through resource depletion. Both civilizations combined a permanent war economy with a state-level enthusiasm for human sacrifice. So we cannot presume that goodness and light will logically follow from any given belief system. Not only that, but a variation of the Law of Mother Earth could be co-opted by powerful First World interests for their own purposes, as is happening now with investment banks and carbon credit schemes.

Yet these are long-range concerns and the people of the global south have an immediate problem facing them, as we all do.

Skeptics will question the wisdom of bringing what writer Terence McKenna once called "the archaic revival" to state level. But is granting legal rights to Pachamama or Mother Earth any more quixotic than the Fourteenth Amendment, which grants US corporations the legal status of personhood? Is the idea that jaguars, pythons and leafcutter ants should have rights any stranger than the notions of former Fraser Institute head Michael Walker, who once insisted that every square inch of the planet, every cubic foot of air and water, should be privatized and owned by somebody – even if the 'somebody' is defined as an account number in the Cayman Islands?

Others will question the wisdom of projecting feminine status onto the environment, and claim this takes gender bias to biospheric levels. Yet anthropomorphizing the planet as maternal figure isn't quite so backwards as some may think. Motherhood and the birth process, with its commingling of joy and pain, is a convenient shorthand for the fecundity of nature. Beyond that, "mother" and "matter" – the stuff of the material world – originate from same Indo-European root word: the Sanskrit "ma." This single phoneme is usually the first word from the mouths of babes everywhere. Mother, *madre*, *mater*… the various derivations of "ma" are found in languages the world over.

The 'ur-mother,' the womb of biological matter, is Earth herself. Yo' mama and mine. The Ecuadorians and Bolivians get it.

www.geoffolson.com

Independent Media Steve Anderson

Let people regulate themselves

In early February, OpenMedia.ca received word the CRTC was planning a set of invitation-only meetings on March 23 and 24 in Ottawa. Entitled "Shaping Regulatory Approaches for the Future," the forum was meant to bring together the "stakeholders" of Canadian telecommunications for "meaningful discussions" on modern regulatory approaches to the telecom industry in Canada and abroad. In other words, the meeting was set to be a consultation on the future of the Internet in Canada.

OpenMedia criticized the invitation-only, closed structure of the forum and pressured the CRTC to invite the real "stakeholders" in the future of the Internet – Canadian citizens. The CBC picked up on this message and put the issue to the CRTC. In response, on March 14, the CRTC expressed its desire to "open up" the forum and invited me to attend.

The CRTC refused to video or audio stream the meeting and imposed the "Chatham House Rule," which prevents attendees from attributing comments. The forum's organizers argued these rules would better allow invitees to "speak freely" and discuss issues openly. This, in itself, is telling about the kind of "stakeholders" invited to attend. If the CRTC felt that invitees would pontificate and perform in favour of their special interests, perhaps the commission should question their motives in influencing Canada's digital regulatory future in the first place.

"What are the differences between Mark Zuckerberg (Facebook) and me? I give private information on corporations to you for free, and I'm a villain. Zuckerberg gives your private information to corporations for money and he's Man of the Year." - *Bill Hader playing Julian Assange on SNL*

If the CRTC felt that invitees would pontificate and perform in favour of their special interests, perhaps the commission should question their motives in influencing Canada's digital regulatory future in the first place.

At the meeting, innovators were certainly underrepresented considering the topic at hand. The discussion would have benefited from better representation from services like Hootsuite and online media projects like OpenFile or The Tyee. It's interesting this sector was probably the least represented at the forum, yet this seems to be where the most innovation, entrepreneurialism and economic development are happening.

Roughly six people represented the public, depending on how you define public interest. This isn't a bad ratio on the face of it, but I personally think organizations that represent the public should be the best-represented category, given we're talking about regulations that should be made in the interest of the public.

At one point during the forum, I spoke to a telecom rep who said they had previously worked for the CRTC. This is probably not unique and is evidence of the revolving door between industry and the commission. What was interesting is that after I tweeted this fact and it caused a stir, people seemed so shocked I would indelicately point this out to the public. Really, this is the kind of stuff that needs to be publicized! We can't fix the CRTC's structural problems without finding the cause of those problems.

The CRTC's insulation is a problem and one way of countering this is to make its meetings more transparent and its processes more open and accessible.

On July 11, the CRTC is holding a public hearing on Internet Metering – an issue that nearly half a million Canadians have spoke out against by signing StopTheMeter.ca petition. This hearing is a unique opportunity for the CRTC to join the 21st century by fully engaging citizens in the process.

Steve Anderson is the national coordinator for OpenMedia.ca. He has written for The Tyee, Toronto Star, Epoch Times and Adbusters. steve@openmedia.ca, www.FacebookSteve.com, www.SteveOnTwitter.com

Planet Hollywood review

From *Life in a Day*: A mother in the Marsabit region of Kenya speaks of the love for her children. Courtesy of Mongrel Media.

Earth and its inhabitants are in trouble. Oceans are acidifying and sea levels rising at the fastest rate in 2,000 years. Biodiversity is in freefall, ecosystems are stressed to breaking point and like a deer caught in the headlights, humankind is watching this tragedy of its own making unfold, paralyzed by indecision and greed.

But forget reality; the aliens are coming. Again. And in that ever so familiar Hollywood narrative, we will be blasting our way to victory – well, at least Harrison Ford, Daniel Craig and a few square-jawed heroes will. I confess I haven't yet seen *Cowboys & Aliens* (out at the end of the month), but it's a pretty crazy proposition having an alien invasion taking place in the Wild West of 1873. "The coolest version of the Western, meeting some bad ass aliens," is how producer Ron Howard describes the reportedly $100million movie.

I'm sure there will be wall-to-wall special effects and the good guys – the humanoids - will win. It's probably the usual unadulterated escapism, of course, tapping that sense of unease about the state of the planet, without tweaking our conscience. And what better way to do that than to kick some interplanetary scumbags from here into some other solar system so we can leave the cinema feeling we've put the Earth to rights. Maybe *Cowboys & Aliens* will prove me wrong, but Hollywood has a way of breeding low expectations.

Another Earth (out July 22) takes a more sensitive approach to our planet. As much a slowly unfolding and artfully framed human drama as sci-fi, the film features two Earths: the one we know and live on and another Earth that looms ominously overhead in the sky for much of the film. Earth number two is apparently a duplicate, inhabited by our other selves. Much of the film is concerned with how two damaged individuals begin to recover from a horrific car incident: one a drunk driver, burdened by guilt and regret, the other a victim, consumed with grief. The fatal incident occurs on the eve of the discovery of the new Earth, but you must wait to discover the significance of this planetary doppelgänger.

Really, one Earth should be quite enough. Especially if you're trying to film it all at the same time, which is exactly what Oscar-winning director Kevin Macdonald decided to do with his ambitious *Life in a Day* (out July 29). With the help of tens of thousands of YouTubers, he and his team compressed 4,500 hours of footage from 192 countries down to a single feature documentary. Pieced together like a collage, the film unfolds in chronological order, moving from midnight onwards. It captures all aspects of the human experience around the world as it happened on July 24, 2010. The film has had warm reviews – one critic likened it to "an extended pop video" – although perhaps due to its sweeping coverage, reviewers have found it difficult to invest emotionally in the subject matter.

In Liz Garbus' new documentary, the late US chess champion Bobby Fischer is the alien. *Bobby Fischer Against the World* (out July 22) has been lauded for capturing the high drama of the Cold War "Match of the Century" between Fischer and Russian chess champ Boris Spassky, as well as the subsequent spiral downwards of the ingenious, but mentally disturbed protagonist.

Robert Alstead made the Vancouver documentary You Never Bike Alone www.youneverbikealone.com He writes at www.2020Vancouver.com

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JUL 3
Shiatsu Therapy Program Information Evening at Langara College, Room B144, 7-8:30PM. For information: 604-876-0042.

JUL 9
"Discovery Day" at Mountain View Cemetery, 10AM-2PM. (West of Fraser Street between 31st and 43rd.) Join us for a day of walking tours and even a bicycle tour. Explore the history, people and events that have shaped Mountain View Cemetery as we celebrate our 125th birthday. Bring a picnic and enjoy our 106 acres of green space and spectacular views of the city and mountains. Interested in helping out? Contact Jeannie at jlochrie@telus.net

JUL 10
Barbara Marx Hubbard will be speaking on the theme of "Visions of a Universal Humanity", 1 - 3 PM.at Canadian Memorial United Church, 15th & Burrard St. She will dialogue in a Q & A session with Rev. Bruce Sanguin. (She also delivers the sermon at the Sunday service,10:30 AM). Tickets $15/advance, $20/door,available at the Centre for Peace, 1825 W.16th Ave. 604-731-3101.

JUL 10
Zen Shiatsu Basics: The Back: Learn to give a relaxing back treatment. Ideal for couples. 10AM-2PM. $85. Sourcepoint Shiatsu Centre. 604-876-0042, www.sourcepointshiatsu.com

JUL 15-17
Introduction to Foot Reflexology commences Certificate Weekend Training Course. Introduction 7.30 pm $10; Course $395. Pacific Institute of Reflexology (604) 875-8818, www.pacificreflexology.com

JUL 15-17
Vancouver Folk Music Festival at Jericho Beach Park. Early bird tickets to June 11. Children under 12 free. Group discounts. Tickets 604-602-9798. www.thefestival.bc.ca Box office: 411 Dunsmuir Street, Vancouver.

JUL 21
"Hidden in Plain Sight – UFOs and their Spiritual Mission" Free multi-media presentation. 7-9PM. Roundhouse Community Centre (Pacific @ Davie). 604.983.0926.

JUL 21
Free Information Evening & Shamanic Experience. Learn how to create a "Power Altar" & learn more about the Shamanic Training Program that begins this fall. Evening hosted by the Institute of Shamanic Medicine. 7:15pm, Vancouver. Space is limited. RSVP early. Email info@shamanicmedicine.ca or call 1-877-329-8668. www.shamanicmedicine.ca

JUL 22-24
Towards Eden Festival: BC's First ever off-the-grid music festival powered by Earth & Solar energies. Nahatlatch Valley, BC. A family-friendly drug & alcohol free event. Camping, Kids Zone, Sustainability Workshops and Marketplace. 3 Unique Musical Space Experiences, Electronic and Acoustic performances by Gaudi, Adham Shaikh, Shine, Buckman Coe and many more! Tickets & info at www.towardseden.com or email info@towardseden.com

JUL 24
"Jog for the Bog" – Come for the run. Stay for the fun. Register for the Jog for Burns Bog at www.jogforthebog.org or call 604-572-0373. All ages & abilities. 5km walk/run & 10km trail run. Starts at 10388 Nordel Court. Lots of parking available. Registration opens 8AM. Call 604-572-0373 for more info or email info@burnsbog.org

JUL 24
The Path to Wellness "BC Traditional Chinese Medicine Acupuncture Day": Free, 10AM-5PM, Chinese Cultural Centre, 50 East Pender St. Celebration includes complementary consultation, TCM & acupuncture seminars, free clinics, educational booths, Tai Chi Health seminar, Kung Fu performance and traditional Chinese live music performance. 604-278-6220.

JUL 27
Cancer Treatment Options & Management, Inc. presenting a 3-hour Seminar: "Using Current Advancements in Cancer Research to Improve Life Expectancy" at the Coast Plaza Hotel; 6:30-9:30PM. $39.99; For details: contact@ctoam.com; www.ctoam.com; 778.999.5463.

JUL 27 - AUG 7
Zen Shiatsu Essentials: Learn a thorough shiatsu therapy treatment and basic theory. Mon-Fri. 9AM-2PM. $750. Sourcepoint Shiatsu Centre. 604-876-0042, www.sourcepointshiatsu.com

JUL 29-AUG 7
Harmony Arts Festival: Celebrating art and community. The Festival takes place along West Vancouver's waterfront between 14th Street and 16th Street.
More info at www.harmonyarts.ca

JUL 30
The Second Annual Triple Crown for Heart charity cycling event for BC Children's Hospital. The ride is a unique challenge up three North Shore mountains: Seymour, Grouse and Cypress. Post event party on the top of Cypress Mountain. $45 entry fee for adults; charitable receipts will be issued. Info: www.triplecrownforheart.ca

JUL 30 & 31
Chair Shiatsu Weekend: A blend of shiatsu theory and practice applied to the massage chair format. 9AM-5PM. $250. Sourcepoint Shiatsu Centre. 604-876-0042, www.sourcepointshiatsu.com

AUG 11, 12-14, & 20
Experience the Power of Soul Healing with Dr. & Master Zhi Gang Sha. Free Soul Healing evening Aug. 11. Introduction to Tao: Aug 12-14. Soul Healing Day Aug. 20. Info: 604-733-0853. Register www.Dr.Sha.com or call 888-339-6815.

AUG 26-28
Introduction to Foot Reflexology commences Certificate Weekend Training Course. Introduction 7:30PM, $10; Course $395. Pacific Institute of Reflexology (604) 875-8818, www.pacificreflexology.com

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Email colette@crystalinevision.com
1-306-584-9135.

SEP 27
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SEP 29-OCT 2
American Monetary Institute Reform Conference, University Center, downtown Chicago. Dedicated to the independent study of monetary history, theory and reform. Info/registration at www.monetary.org or by phone 1-224-805-2200.

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Centre for Spiritual Living: Join us every Sunday @ 9:15 AM & 11 AM for practical spirituality with great music. Meditation: 10:15 AM. 1880 Triumph Street, Suite 8 (at Victoria Drive), Vancouver.
Info: 604-321-1225, www.cslvancouver.com

SOS (Science of Spirituality): See Resource Directory listing in Spiritual Practices for schedule in Richmond, Vancouver & Victoria. 604-277-1247.
All Welcome. www.sos.org

TUESDAYS

Reflexology Student Clinic 6–10pm. One- hour sessions $20. By appointment only. Pacific Institute of Reflexology (604) 875-8818.
www.pacificreflexology.com

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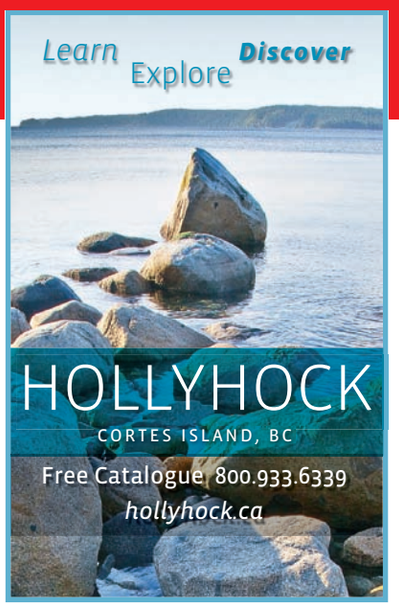
Elizabeth Scott
June 22, 1939 - June 4, 2011

Born in Boston, spending years in California, Elizabeth came to Vancouver around 1980, from Oregon, where she owned a health food store. There was a lively group of like-minded intellectuals in the city, exploring ideas of living ungoverned lives. Few knew she led a protest to block use of nuclear power, testifying before the US Nuclear Regulatory Commission and, with others, prevented the implementation of the plan.

She made life-long friends here, managed Finlandia Pharmacy on Broadway, sold air time and spoke on NewsfortheSoul.com. Counseling was second nature, clients enriched by her words of wisdom, her depth of perception. Elizabeth remained a counselor all of her life, heard the stories and shared the pain as her natural empathy relaxed people, as she led them to see the astounding depth of their own potential. She cared deeply about our world, could converse as easily about physics as human nature, and understood clearly that a good laugh is a diamond beyond price. We miss you Elizabeth.

by Janice Brown



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Graduating to Peace in the nuclear shadow

Dear Graduates,

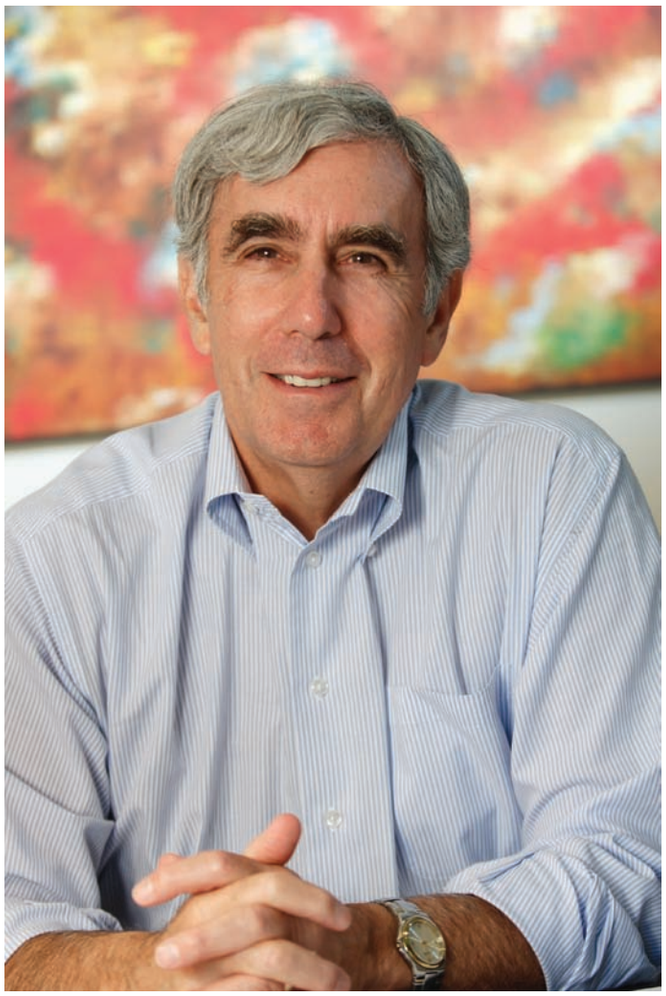
Having received a college degree, you are among the 6.7 percent of the world's most educated elite. If your education has been a good one, you are likely to have more questions than answers. If your education has been mediocre, you are likely to think you have more answers than questions.

Did you have a chance in college to ponder these questions: What does it mean to be human? Why are we here on Earth? What are the greatest goals one can pursue in life? What are the keys to a happy and fulfilled life? If you didn't, it's not too late.

You may have taken many introductory courses during your college years, but was there a course on Global Survival 101? If not, you may not be prepared to make a difference in ending the great dangers to humanity in the 21st century.

Do you know how many nuclear weapons there are in the world? Do you know which countries possess them? Do you know what nuclear weapons do to cities? Do you know whether these weapons are legal or illegal under international law? Do you know whether they could end civilization and the human species?

Do you know about the Nuremberg Principles, those that were derived from the tribunals at Nuremberg that held the Nazi leaders to account after World War II? Do you know that these principles apply not just to Nazi leaders, but to all leaders who commit heinous crimes under international law? Do you know what those crimes are?



David Krieger. Photo by Phil Channing

Have you studied the Universal Declaration of Human Rights? Do you know to whom these rights apply? Do you know that these rights encompass economic and social rights as well as political and civil rights?

Do you know that we all live on a single fragile planet and that we humans are the caretakers and stewards of this planet, not only for ourselves, but for future generations yet unborn?

Do you realize that you are about to enter a world of vast inequities, as measured in money, health and happiness? Do you understand that throughout the world there are more than a billion people who are malnourished and go to bed hungry every night? Can you comprehend that in our world there are still 25,000 children who die daily of starvation and preventable diseases?

Does your education lead you to believe that money will buy happiness? It may buy fancy material things, and even status, but it is unlikely that it will buy happiness or fulfillment in life. Caring for others and living with compassion, commitment and courage offers a far surer path to a fulfilled and happy life.

Graduating from college is a commencement, not an ending. It is a commencement into responsibility for one's society and one's world. Exercising this responsibility is a daily task, a necessary and never-ending task. It is a task that will require further education, outside the college classroom, but inside the multiversity of life.

The world needs to change. We cannot continue to teeter on the precipice of nuclear and ecological disasters. We cannot continue to exist divided into those who live in abundance and those who live in scarcity. We cannot allow the greed of the few to overwhelm the need of the many. We cannot continue to exploit the planet's finite resources, in effect, stealing from the future. We cannot continue to draw lines on the planet and separate ourselves into warring factions.

For the world to change, new peace leaders and change makers will be needed. The first and most important questions you must ask yourself in your new role as graduates are these: Will I be one of the peace leaders and change makers, devoting myself to building a better world? Or, will I choose to be detached and complacent in the face of the 21st century's social, economic, political and military threats to humanity?

As the little prince, in Antoine de Saint-Exupéry's book by that name, stated so clearly, "It's a matter of discipline…. When you've finished washing and dressing each morning, you must tend your planet." Look around. Our beautiful planet needs a lot of tending.

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About the Nuclear Age Peace Foundation

The Nuclear Age Peace Foundation envisions a world at peace, free of the threat of war and free of weapons of mass destruction. We initiate and support worldwide efforts to abolish nuclear weapons, to strengthen international law and institutions, and to inspire and empower a new generation of peace leaders. Founded in 1982, the Foundation is comprised of individuals and organizations worldwide who realize the imperative for peace in the Nuclear Age.

We are a non-profit, non-partisan international education and advocacy organization. We have consultative status to the United Nations Economic and Social Council and are recognized by the UN as a Peace Messenger Organization.

Our work is endorsed by tens of thousands of supporters around the world, including the Dalai Lama, who said, "The Nuclear Age Peace Foundation has been doing excellent work by encouraging a climate of peace and harmony in the world. It has been a consistent voice in ending the nuclear weapons threat to humanity and all life."

Our two main websites, wagingpeace.org and nuclearfiles.org, together have over 750,000 unique visitors each year. Nuclear Files is an educational website that gives a detailed look at the history of the Nuclear Age. Waging Peace is an advocacy and education site that details all of the Foundation's campaigns and contains an extensive archive of articles on nuclear issues.

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